

**Request for Applications for
Family Empowerment Centers on Disability Grants**

Due August 1, 2006

**United States Department of Education Grant
Administered by the
Special Education Division
California Department of Education**

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Empowerment Centers

Request For Applications (RFA) for Family Empowerment Centers on Disability Grants

Deadline for submission: August 1, 2006, 4 p.m.

Please mail or deliver to:

Allison Smith, Consultant, Administrative Unit
Special Education Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 2401
Sacramento, CA 95814

I. Background

Federal and state laws mandate active parent participation in securing special education services for children with disabilities. Despite these requirements California's families too often lack access to the kinds of training and resources they need to provide for the full development of their children with disabilities. The United States Department of Education (USDE) funds several Parent Training Information Centers (PTICs) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs) in California, but these centers are reaching less than 10 percent of the families whose children are enrolled in special education programs. The Early Start Family Resource Centers, which are more numerous and distributed throughout the state, are restricted by state legislation to serving families with children up to three years of age. Therefore, the majority of families whose children are over the age of three do not have access to the information, training, and support they need to be effectively involved in their children's education.

II. Purpose and Goals

Senate Bill (SB) 511, Chapter 4.3 (*Education Code* sections 56400–56414) was enacted to do all of the following things:

- (a) Ensure that children and young adults with disabilities are provided a free and appropriate public education in accordance with applicable federal and state law and regulations.
- (b) Ensure that children and young adults with disabilities receive the necessary educational support and services they need to complete their education.
- (c) Offer parents and guardians of children and young adults with disabilities access to accurate information, specialized training, and peer-to-peer support in their communities.
- (d) Ensure that parents, guardians, and families of children and young adults with disabilities are full participants in their child's education, school reform, and comprehensive systems change efforts.
- (e) Build upon existing local and regional service delivery systems to improve, expand, and offer coordinated technical assistance to the network of existing resources available for parents, guardians, and families of children and young adults with disabilities (*Education Code* Section 56400).

To meet these goals, “The state Department shall award grants to establish Family Empowerment Centers on Disability in each of the 32 regions in the state established under the Early Start Family Resource Centers” (*Education Code* Section 56402[a]).

III. Funding Available

This grant is funded with an appropriation from federal funds to the California Department of Education pursuant to *United States Code*, Title 20, Chapter 33, Section 1411, and shall be used for the purposes outlined in *Education Code*, Chapter 4.3, Part 30, sections 56400–56414. The Family Empowerment Centers on Disability Grants funds are subject to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA); the *Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)*, Title 34, Part 301 (Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities); and Education Department Guidelines Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) as applicable.

According to *Education Code* Section 56406(a), grants awarded to Family Empowerment Centers on Disability by the California Department of Education shall be based on a formula that does the following things:

- (1) Establishes a minimum base rate of...\$150,000 for each center to provide the basic services pursuant to this chapter and serve parents and guardians of children and young adults from age three years to age 18 years, inclusive, and to those young adults from age 19 years to age 22 years who had an individualized education plan prior to their 18th birthday.
- (2) Establishes an allocation mechanism that is determined according to school enrollment of the region serviced.

So far, 12 of a total of 32 proposed Family Empowerment Centers on Disability have been established (see Appendix A). The 2005 Budget Act (Item 6110-161-0890 Schedule [7] Provision 7) appropriated \$2,794,000 to the Family Empowerment Centers; of this appropriation, \$422,000 has been earmarked to fund two new Family Empowerment Centers. As noted above, centers will be allocated a base amount of \$150,000, plus an additional amount calculated on the basis of student enrollment in their region. Prospective Family Empowerment Center regions and funds available for each region are included in Appendix B. Only one center may be established in each of the 32 regions. Only two new centers will be funded through this grant process.

Continued funding for the existing centers and the funding of additional centers in succeeding years is contingent on appropriation of funds in the annual Budget Act.

IV. Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to receive funds to establish a Family Empowerment Center applicants must meet the following organizational requirements as noted in *Education Code* Section 56404:

- (a) Be a nonprofit charitable organization organized under the Internal Revenue Code pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) of Section 501 of Title 26 of the United States Code.

(b) Be staffed primarily by parents, guardians, and family members of children and young adults with disabilities and by adults with disabilities.

(c) Have as a majority of board members of each center; parents, guardians, and family members of children and young adults with disabilities who have experience with local or regional disability systems and educational resources. Additional members shall include, but not be limited to, persons with disabilities and representatives of community agencies serving adults with disabilities, and other community agencies.

(d) Demonstrate the capacity to provide services in accordance with the family support guidelines developed by the Early Start Family Resource Centers pursuant to Section 95004 of the Government Code and administered by the State Department of Developmental Services [see Appendix D], and Parent Training Information Centers established pursuant to Sections 1482 and 1483 of Title 20 of the United States Code [see Appendix E].

V. Project Requirements

According to *Education Code* Section 56406(b), "Each grant applicant shall demonstrate all of the following:"

(1) That the need for training and information for underserved parents and guardians of children and young adults with disabilities in the area to be served will be effectively met.

(2) That services will be delivered in a manner that accomplishes all of the following:

(A) All families have access to services regardless of cultural, linguistic, geographical, socioeconomic, or other similar barriers.

(B) Services are provided in accordance with families' linguistic and cultural preferences and needs.

(C) Services are coordinated with the existing family support organizations within the region.

(D) Promotes positive parent and professional collaboration with local educational agencies, special education local plan areas, and other community agencies.

The grant application must address how the proposed Family Empowerment Center will undertake the following activities as they are outlined in *Education Code* Section 56408:

(a) Provide training and information that meets the training and information needs of parents and guardians of children and young adults with disabilities living in the area served by the center, particularly those families and individuals who have been underserved.

(b) Work with community-based organizations and state and local agencies serving children with disabilities.

(c) Train and support parents and guardians of children and young adults with disabilities to do the following:

(1) Better understand the nature of their children's disabilities and their children's educational and developmental needs.

(2) Communicate effectively with personnel responsible for providing special education, early intervention*, and related services [and transition assistance].

(3) Participate in decision-making processes and the development of individualized education programs.

(4) Obtain appropriate information regarding [special education laws and regulations] and the range of options, programs, services, and resources available to assist children and young adults with disabilities and their families.

(5) Participate in school improvement and reform activities [such as the California State Improvement Grant (<http://www.calstat.org/sigPcse.html>)].

(6) Advocate for the child's needs in a manner that promotes alternative forms of dispute resolution and positive relationships between parents and professionals.

The grant application must also demonstrate a record of collaboration with local educational agencies (LEAs), special education local plan areas (SELPAs), and other community parent groups. **Letters of support documenting current and/or future collaboration are required.**

* For purposes of the Family Empowerment Centers on Disability, early intervention means those interventions that are provided to preschool-aged children (ages three through five).

VI. Administrative Requirements

A. Required Forms

All grant applicants must agree to the assurances and certifications required for compliance with state and federal law. By submitting your application, you are confirming your agreement to abide by the General Assurances found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/fm>. **In addition, you must print out, sign, and attach to your application the following certifications:** 1) Drug-Free Workplace, CDE-100DF; 2) Lobbying, ED 80-0013; and 3) Debarment and Suspension, ED 80-0014. These forms can be also found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/fm>.

B. Reporting

A mid-year progress and expenditure report are due no later than April 16, 2007.
A year-end progress report and final expenditure report are due no later than October 30, 2007.

C. Grant Payments

The first grant payment is 25 percent of the total grant amount. The first grant payment will be issued on receipt of the signed Certification of Acceptance of Grant Conditions.

The second grant payment is typically 50 percent of the total grant amount. The second grant payment will be issued on receipt of a mid-year expenditure report. This report is used to determine the amount of the second grant payment on the basis of the center's actual expenditures.

The Business/Fiscal Officer for the Grantee shall submit a final expenditure report within 60 days of the termination date of the grant. Once the California Department of Education receives the final expenditure report and a final progress report, up to 100 percent of the grant will be reimbursed.

VII. Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a team composed of parents of children with disabilities, Family Empowerment Center staff members, educators, and professional state agency staff members. A review team will refer to Appendix F, Matrix for Competitive Grants Scoring of Prospective Family Empowerment Centers.

The extent to which the application meets the scoring criteria is the primary basis for selection. Factored into the selection process will be the degree to which the awarded projects are representative of the cultural and geographic diversity of the state.

Recommendations from the reviewers will be submitted to the CDE Deputy Superintendent of the Curriculum and Instruction Branch for final approval of successful and unsuccessful applicants.

VIII. Application Content

A. Program Abstract

Provide a one-page description of your project, including the name and contact information for the project; the name of the region to be served; and a summary of goals, objectives, and expected outcomes, including projected numbers of parents served by your center through this grant.

B. Overall Description of Proposed Family Empowerment Center (FEC) (10 Possible Points)

Describe the overall program proposed in this application, including the applicant's eligibility, its capacity to provide the required services, a brief statement of need, and the geographic area and target population to be served. Include pertinent information about current training and family support activities. Address all the requirements set out in Section IV, "Eligibility Requirements." Include in the appendix of your application a copy of your tax-exempt letter designating your organization's 501(c)(3) status.

C. Family Empowerment Center Program Design (25 Possible Points)

Provide 1) overall goals; 2) objectives; 3) methods or approaches; 4) and expected outcomes. Describe how your center will serve your geographic region, reach unserved families, and provide the required training and support to the families within your region. Describe how this program will expand or supplement current family support and training activities. Address all areas in Section V “Project Requirements” of this application.

D. Community Involvement and Links (10 Possible Points)

Center and community involvement is an essential part of any successful program. Programs must be designed, managed, and directed with involvement from the community, including Early Start Family Resource Centers, IDEA-funded parent centers, parents, young adults and adults with disabilities, non-profit organizations serving families and people with disabilities, regional centers, SELPA(s), school districts, and independent living centers. Describe how your center will help complement the system of support and information in your region for children with disabilities from birth to 22. Attach letters of support and commitment of resources in the appendix of your application.

E. Work Plan (25 Possible Points)

For each objective identified in your program design, provide 1) the key activities; 2) clearly defined responsibilities; 3) milestones; and 4) timelines for the entire grant period to include: a) the activities needed to fully implement your plan; and b) enough detail about the activities to show that the program has been well planned and will have been fully implemented by the end of the funding period.

F. Project Staffing (10 Possible Points)

Provide names of all key staff members involved in implementing the program, describe specific program responsibilities for key staff members, and indicate the amount of time each key staff person will spend implementing the program in full-time equivalent (FTE) or number of hours to be worked. Describe the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. Resumes should be included in the appendix of your application.

G. Program Monitoring And Evaluation (10 Possible Points)

Program monitoring and evaluation is an important component of the program. Provide evidence of incorporating evaluation as a useful source of feedback for program improvement implementation and information regarding program effectiveness. In addition, include in your application a description of how your center will collect required data on 1) the total number of parents contacting your center; 2) the increase in the number of parents from targeted, unserved populations served by your center; 3) the

number of professionals contacting your center; 4) the numbers of parents and professionals attending training; 5) the number of parents receiving one-on-one consultation; 6) the types of issues resolved; 7) the approaches to developing partnerships among parents and professionals; and 8) the number of potential due process hearings avoided.

H. Budget Summary and Budget Justification (10 Possible Points)

Provide a line item budget and budget justification for the entire grant period. Outline the dollar amount budgeted in each line item. Provide sufficient line item detail to justify the budget. Appendix C, Budget Form, is provided for your use.

In addition, list all funding sources of the applicant organization for the current fiscal year and include a brief description of the purpose of each grant or contract, the amount of funding, and the timeframe of funding. Please attach additional pages as necessary.

Budget Modifications: Surplus funds from a given line item of the approved budget, up to 10 percent of that line item, may be used to defray allowable direct costs under other budget line items without prior approval. Any budget line item increase or decrease of more than 10 percent requires an approved budget revision as required by state law or CDE policy. Changes may not be made that increase the rates of reimbursement, unless these changes are a part of a negotiated collective bargaining agreement. The total grant count may not be increased but may be decreased by CDE pending available funds.

IX. Appeal Process

Applicants who wish to appeal a grant award decision must submit a letter of appeal to:

Allison Smith, Consultant, Administrative Unit
Special Education Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 2401
Sacramento, CA 95814

The letter of appeal must be received by 4 p.m. on August 27, 2006.

The appeal letter must describe why the applicant concludes that the readers did not follow the prescribed scoring criteria and explain why the score is in conflict with scoring criteria or the grant award process described in the RFA. The appeal letter must also identify specific information in the application that the applicant believes was overlooked or misinterpreted. The application will be re-evaluated by the CDE designees or staff.

The CDE Deputy Superintendent of the Curriculum and Instruction Branch will make the final decision on the appeal and shall be the last administrative action afforded the appellant.

X. Application Format

Application requirements:

- Only typed applications will be accepted.
- Font size: 12 pitch.
- Limit the narrative section of the proposal to 25 pages. The narrative section does not include budget pages or letters of support.
- The appendix of your application should include: 1) a copy of your tax-exempt letter designating your organization's 501(c)(3) status; 2) letters of support and commitment of resources; and 3) resumes or vita of key project personnel.
- All pages must be numbered sequentially.
- Please do not send brochures or sample materials for your organization.

The request for application is also available online at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r18/fecxpn05rfa.asp>.

Ten copies of the application are due August 1, 2006, 4 p.m.

Please mail or deliver to:

Allison Smith, Consultant, Administrative Unit
Special Education Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 2401
Sacramento, CA 95814

XI. Timeline

Notice of the Request for Application (RFA) for the Family Empowerment Centers on Disability Grants	6/1/06
Release of Request for Application packet	6/1/06
Letter of intent to submit	6/19/06
Deadline for receipt of application	8/1/06
Review and selection	8/2/06- 8/18/06
Notice of award	8/21/06
Grant Award Period	9/1/06 – 8/30/07
Mid-year progress report due	No later than 4/16/07
Final progress report and final expenditure report due	No later than 10/30/07

XII. Assistance

Any prospective applicant needing clarification on the RFA or program issues may contact Allison Smith, (916) 327-3932, or asmith@cde.ca.gov .